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## Blood In, Blood Out

by [Deminos](#)

### Summary

Merlin is exposed to the more brutal aspect of Arthur's profession. He gets to witness what happens to those who betray the family, but it does nothing to quell his rapidly growing feelings for the crime boss.

### Notes

Thank you so much to [AHaresBreath](#) and [Wyvern](#) for betaing this fic for me. Blame Trojie for the wall sex because that wouldn't have existed if not for her. :)

Also! Thank you so much for the artists and writers of [GSD Fandom](#) on Mibbit for encouraging me and making sure that I was productive enough to churn out the words to make this update possible.

There are two sex scenes and a cliffhanger so you guys have been warned!

Merlin wakes up to the familiar comforting touch of his mother stroking his hair. "Mum," he mumbles, groggy as he tries to sit up. "What time is it?" He asks, the sleepiness mangles his words, and it comes out more like a groaning gurgle than anything really coherent.

"No, no," Hunith chides, pushing him back down on the bed. "It's early yet. I just wanted to spend a little bit of time with you before I head off to work."

Merlin nods, falling back onto the bed and sighing into her touch. She smells like lavender and soap from the hotel where she works as a cleaner. She's better now, the reduced work hours and better food has returned the flesh to her bones and the colour to her face.

"So," she says after a moment's silence. "When do I get to find out about your special someone?" She asks, finger poking at his neck.

Merlin lets out a embarrassed squawk, hand slapping at the back of his neck to cover the hickey that he knows is there. "It's," he stutters, feeling his face flush up. "It's complicated." He's taken to going to bed fully clothed now. Because Arthur is an absolute prat, and there hasn't been a day since they met where Merlin doesn't have some sort of mark on his body courtesy of Arthur bloody Pendragon. The hickeys and blemishes of colour littering his body are such a constant feature that they almost feel like a brand. Merlin wonders when he had stopped minding and accepted their presence as part of himself. "Mum," he whines petulantly, putting the sheets up to his neck *just in case*. He feels like he's six again, still terrified of monsters under the bed. Then again, he supposes that he'll always be her little boy no matter what.

"Is it someone at work?"

Merlin frowns, unsure of how to reply. How is he to explain to his mother that he's currently having relations with the man that his father— her *husband*, had owed money to? He's not sure if it even counts as a relationship. Merlin... Merlin isn't sure of anything when it comes to Arthur. Or maybe, maybe he does know but he's not ready to admit to anyone, not even to himself. He's silent for too long, because his mother just smiles weakly. "As long as you're happy, my darling boy."

That makes Merlin cringe, because Arthur has very much ruined the term "darling" for him, at least when his mother uses it. It's... It's not so bad when Arthur says it, not now at least.

"I should let you go back to bed. I'll be home late tonight so dinner is made and just needs to be heated up."

Merlin chuckles, feeling the love he has for her swell up in his chest. "You didn't have to do that. I can manage on my own."

"I'll believe that when you actually start putting some meat on your bones, young man." She stands up, leaning to kiss the spot where the blanket doesn't cover his head. "Have a nice day at work, dear."

"You too," he says back, burrowing deeper into his blankets and is lulled back to sleep by the sound of his mother's receding footsteps. Merlin wakes up a few hours later, feeling refreshed as he tinkers around the tiny apartment he shares with his mother. He gets a little reading done, catches up on the current state of events, and simply finds pleasure in his own company.

Mundane. Predictable.

It's odd, having so much time to himself for once and before he knows it, Merlin starts counting down the hours before Lancelot picks him up.

The stockings are of a fine quality. Merlin digs deeper into his drawers to pull out the rest of his ensemble. The panties go on first, the fabric soft on his cock, pushing it snug against his belly. He slips on the garter belt first, intricate lace stretching tautly over his hipbones. The suspenders dangle at his outer thighs, silver clips cold against his skin. It's always such a bizarre marvel putting stockings on. They never look like much, more like scraps of fabric than anything else, but when Merlin slips his foot in, the silk and nylon blend seems endless as it rides over his ankle,

travelling up to his knee to hug at his thighs. The next one slides on just as easily, and Merlin attaches the hem of the stockings to the garter clips.

The first few steps in them are always awkward, the silk sliding against his skin, touching him everywhere. He stumbles into his pants, squirming from his cock rubbing against the underwear. Merlin finishes tying up the laces of his shoes just as there's a knock on the door.

It's not Lancelot.

"Who are you?" Merlin blurts out.

He doesn't seem to be much older than Merlin, younger even. "I'm Daegal, sir." He shuffles on his feet awkwardly, the chauffeur uniform slightly too big on his frame and his hat is on crooked. "I'm here to take you to Mr. Pendragon."

"Where's Lancelot?" Merlin asks, instantly concerned.

"He's um, he's sick, sir."

Merlin bites his lip. It's a flimsy lie, obviously so, but he knows better than to ask someone who clearly doesn't know much about the inner workings of Arthur's family. "Let's go then," he says, leaving the threshold of his apartment to follow the boy who's still probably wet behind the ears.

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Merlin finds Arthur in his office, intently frowning over some papers.

They're at the manor today, not Arthur's penthouse in Manhattan and that, for some reason, feels odd.

"So." Merlin quietly closes the door. "A kid by the name of Daegal picked me up today. A bit young, don't you think? Where's Lance?"

Arthur makes a displeased sound at the back of his throat before he puts down the photograph, frown still on his face as he picks up his cigar. "Lancelot is currently indisposed."

"Is he sick?" Merlin doesn't know what tale the photo tells, but it's one that seems to cause Arthur some level of displeasure, distress even.

"Something like that." There's a pause and Arthur seems to make a decision, bringing his zippo lighter to the corner of the photo. The edge catches on fire, bubbling and melting away as it release an awfully acrid scent at being ruined. Arthur drops it into the rubbish bin before it burns his fingers.

If Merlin didn't know better, he'd think that there was something akin to hurt in Arthur's expression. "You have your thinking face on." It's the closest thing he can say to 'you look worried' without showing he cares.

But Arthur knows. Arthur sees straight through him, as if he were made of clean cut glass.

"Merlin," he drawls, a sly smile gracing his lips as he taps his cigar against the crystal ashtray. "Is that worry I hear in your voice?"

Merlin snorts. He's taken a habit of fixing up Arthur's bedroom, straightening out the sheets that they will no doubt ruin later. "Daegal called me 'sir'." He picks up some stray items as well, because for a mob boss, Arthur is actually quite messy. "We also got lost for twenty minutes."

“He’ll learn.”

Merlin freezes halfway to picking up a lonesome sock on the floor. Arthur says that as if... “Is Lancelot not going to be driving me around anymore?” Merlin asks attentively, fingers closing around the sock before standing upright. There’s an awful feeling nipping at his heels. Merlin realises it’s concern because it’s *Lancelot*. Lancelot who’s one of Arthur’s most trusted friends and a soon to be father. “Will he be alright?”

Arthur doesn’t answer, he seems to tighten his grip on his cigar before crushing it out in the ashtray. “*Merlin*,” he says, standing up from his desk and walking over to Merlin, who’s leaning against one of the wooden beams of the four poster bed. “Lancelot,” he starts, placing his hands on Merlin’s hips. “Is with Gwaine and Percy and very much alive, so stop giving me that look.”

“Me?” Merlin laughs. “You’re the one looking like you’ve a rod up your arse.” *Tell me what’s wrong*, he thinks.

“Just the usual, I suppose. Among other things as well,” he says with a shrug of disinterest, but Arthur’s jaw is clenched tight, muscle along his throat visibly ticking. “People thinking they can deal on my territory without facing the consequences. Kanen’s a small fry. All bark and no bite.”

“Speaking of rods in arses.” Arthur unbuckles Merlin’s belt, slipping his hands into Merlin’s pants to cup his arse. “But enough with all that. You’re not here to listen to me complain about work, are you, darling?” He licks at Merlin’s bottom lip, worrying the soft flesh between his teeth before letting go with a parting suckle.

It’s Pavlovian now, the way Merlin moans, feeling his body soften as he readies to be used.

It’s Merlin that leans in for a kiss. Whatever tension Arthur has within his system, he takes it out on Merlin. The kiss is harsh, full of teeth as Merlin allows Arthur to ravish his mouth. “Prat,” Merlin gasps out when they briefly part, needing to breathe. He claws at Arthur’s clothes, unbuttoning the vest and shirt, tugging them off before he starts with Arthur’s pants.

Divested of all of his clothes, save for the undergarments, Merlin’s practically thrown onto the bed, landing on his back as Arthur crawls over him, trapping Merlin’s hand in his own. “Look at you,” he practically purrs, hunger sharp in his gaze as he smirks. “All dolled up for me.”

Merlin lets out a small whine at the touch of Arthur’s clothed cock against his own. The pleasant weight and delicious friction has him bucking up his own hips in an attempt for more. It goes on like this for too long, Arthur rubbing against him, leaving gentle kisses *everywhere*.

“*Arthur*,” he all but begs, needing relief. He’s a mess, a pile of want and desperate need. The lace of the underwear is wet with his own precome while the tip of his cock peeks out from the elastic band

Arthur chuckles, leaning back on his haunches as he kneels between Merlin’s sprawled legs. “Darling,” Arthur all but coos, picking up one of Merlin’s legs and tugging so that he ends up on his stomach.

Merlin’s only able to hump against the mattress like some wayward youth for only a moment before Arthur tuts, clicking his tongue to the roof of his mouth in disapproval. He grasps at Merlin’s lace clad hips, pulling him on his knees while his other half is still low on the bed.

“How bout we spice things up a bit?” Arthur says, not waiting for Merlin’s answer before he begins to rummage through the bedside drawer.

He almost feels bereft at the loss of Arthur's body heat but he's not deprived of it for long. There's the soft thud of the tube of lubricant being tossed onto the bed and the sharp click of something Merlin doesn't recognise.

He knows what it is once the cold steel touches his thigh. A switchblade, sharp and devious against his skin. Merlin lets out a shuddering breath, body shivering in anticipation.

"A-arthur." Apprehension crawls along his spine. They've done raunchy things before, it's Arthur, so it's expected. Merlin's had his breath taken away, cut off. He's been tied up and left desperate and needy. They've never played with knives before and Merlin doesn't know what's going to happen. If Arthur will just tease him with the blade or if he'll actually cut flesh, carve Merlin up, and leave him with marks more permanent than the lovebites and bruises.

"You'll be all right," Arthur says, soothing touch along the back of Merlin's thighs.

Something's changed between them. Merlin knows what is, why it came to be, but at the same time he's not ready to meet it face on. So instead, he becomes pilant, giving Arthur everything.

Arthur makes a deep noise of approval and the blade slides along the silk against Merlin's thigh. He never presses the blade too harshly against Merlin's skin, never moves it in a manner that would cause skin to part and blood to flow free. Soon enough the cold steel warms up, leaving a fine trail of ticklish sensation along his skin.

"It would be so easy," Arthur says, tracing the blade along the garter strap before twisting the blade. "To hurt you. If I wanted to." The elastic snaps apart and Merlin lets out a gasp. Arthur continues his ministrations. This time, the blade dances along the curve of Merlin's arse in stuttering movements.

"Can you?" Merlin asks with a huff of laughter.

There's a sharp ripping sound as Arthur makes a swift vertical cut long Merlin's underwear. He can feel the cool air through the tear, hears the blade being tucked back into its place, before its thrown across the room.

Cool air meets Merlin's reddened skin and his erection is slick with his own precome. He shifts against Arthur's touch, making a small noise that he hopes conveys how much he wants—no—*needs* to come.

The fingers that pry his cheeks open is expected but the only warning he receives is Arthur's hot breath against his skin before a tongue, wet and hot licks at his hole.

"Arthur," he cries out, embarrassed, hips jerking as he fists the sheets. "Wha-" he can barely speak, too distracted by the tongue that licks and teases his entrance, by Arthur's nose nuzzling his crevice.

Arthur's chuckle is muffled as he delves his face deeper between the torn opening of silk.

It feels amazing, more so when Arthur slips in a finger, licking at the stretched rim wetly before adding another digit. The stretch is delicious, the pleasure maddening as Arthur strokes a spot within that has Merlin seeing sparks of white. He bites into the pillow, wailing like some sort of street tart at the pleasure.

He comes untouched, taken over by an orgasm that leaves him breathless, has him blinded in pleasure and it leaves him as a boneless mess.

Merlin lets out a yelp when Arthur slaps his arse, once, twice, before running a soothing hand

along silk, fingers delving into the cut, Arthur tears the rip wider, ruining the panties until they become nothing but scraps of silk that fall onto the bed in a wet heap.

Lips flushed red and still gleaming with spit, Arthur looks far too pleased with himself. "That good?" He asks, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand before flipping Merlin sluggishly onto his back.

Merlin groans. He feels weak, wrung dry, but still he reaches out, fingers straying towards the very obvious erection straining against Arthur's pants. "You didn't get to-" he mumbles, fingers stroking through the fabric.

"Darling," Arthur says, batting Merlin's hands away and reaching for the lube to coat his fingers. "I was saving the best for last."

Merlin would retort with something witty if his brain wasn't so sex addled. The lubricant is cold at first, but rapidly warms up from the friction of Arthur's scissoring fingers within him. It isn't too long before Arthur finally gets bored, taking off his pants and slipping his cock into Merlin's slack hole in one smooth thrust.

"Christ," Arthur says, leaving wet, opened mouth kisses along Merlin's neck, nipping at his ear and suckling at the lobe. "I'll never tire of you," he says, like it's a promise more binding than any written contract they have between them.

He can feel it when Arthur nears the edge of his orgasm because his thrusts become more harsh, and his words stop, replaced with harsh grunts and heavy breathing, loud and intimate in Merlin's ear.

"*Merlin*," Arthur whispers and he comes, spilling his seed.

Merlin can feel it, the way his muscles clench at Arthur's cock, how he so readily accepts the seed that Arthur gives him. They're still joined when Arthur lies on top of him, weight pleasant, all heated muscle slick with sweat. He runs his fingers through Arthur's hair, feeling oddly... *Loved*.

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Merlin wakes up to find Arthur's side of the bed empty. The sheets and blankets are rumpled, the body heat that made them warm having left long ago, leaving behind a crisp coolness. A smile tugs at his lips when he realises that there's no unpleasant stickiness on his body, that Arthur had the mind to clean him up. Though a bath wouldn't be unwarranted. The crawl out of the bed is slow, because his legs still feel like jelly, and he's sore in the best manner.

The bath does its best. The hot water soothes his aching muscles and washes away the dried sweat and spots that Arthur missed before. Though it does nothing to erase the more long lasting signs of their lovemaking. The mirror in the bathroom shows him that he's gained more hickies, even one of his ears is reddened by Arthur's amorous ministrations.

He dresses in the the spare clothes that he leaves at Arthur's place, making sure to button everything up, though there's still one hickey peeks out from his collar and can't be covered up no matter how hard Merlin tries.

Merlin can tell that something is off the moment he enters the corridor. Everyone seems tense somehow. No one's willing to tell him anything. They all wear strained, grievous expressions upon their faces, shoulders heavy as if at a funeral.

"Merlin!" Mordred stutters, stopping dead in his tracks. His eyes are wide, mouth falling open.

Merlin's not sure which one of them is more surprised to see the other. He hasn't seen Mordred since that night at the club. "What are you doing here?" He asks, because last time he checked, Mordred did not work for Arthur Pendragon.

"I had business with Mr. Pendragon," Mordred says, tightening his grip on the camera clutched within his grasp. "It's nice to see you again." He has trouble keeping Merlin's gaze.

"I," Merlin starts, unsure of what to say. Then he realises, "Did you just come from seeing Arthur? You know where he is?"

"Yes. But-"

Merlin cuts him off. "Tell me." He does his best to sound firm, because something is *wrong* goddamnit and he's not going to allow himself to be kept in the dark like some sort of oblivious mafia wife.

"I don't think you're going to like what you see," Mordred replies, sounding sharp. He doesn't look like the naïve lad that Merlin had met at the club months ago. There's a hardness to him that wasn't there before, and Merlin wonders if Arthur is the cause. Does it happen to everyone the moment they're caught in the mafia's grasp? He wonders if the same has happened to him, if he's changed since getting tangled in Arthur's web. The memories of that night at the club, the blood, the fear, comes to him then, and Merlin realises that he has... *Realises* that he has and doesn't care.

"Tell me." Merlin asks, this time he makes sure there's enough steel in his voice to quell any refusal that Mordred might attempt.

"He'll be unhappy," Mordred says, mouth a thin line. "If he found out I was the one that told you."

"Then he won't find out."

"He's in the basement of the left wing."

"Thank you," Merlin says, because he can tell by Mordred's expression that giving him such information must've been akin to having his teeth pulled out.

Merlin's two steps away when Mordred reaches out to grab at his arm, pulling him back.

"If." There's something in his gaze, something Merlin can't quite put a finger on, but when Mordred speaks, there's a stiffness to his words, as if he's had to think so very carefully of how and what to say next. "If you're unhappy," he cautions, "If something changes between you and him. Come to me?" The last words are spoken more softly, ending on a higher note that shows his uncertainty.

For a moment, Merlin is touched at the concern, but only for a moment. "I need to go," he says, jerking his arm free.

It doesn't take long to find Arthur once Merlin knows where to go. The basement is somewhere Merlin's never been into, never had to. He has an inkling however, of the things that go on in there. More than once Arthur has come up from the basement, grim expression on his face, white shirt speckled with blood.

Merlin turns a blind eye, knowing that it's not his business, swallows down whatever he wishes to say in regards to the matter and shows Arthur his displeasure through the sex that they tend to have later.

The pained, gut wrenching sounds of someone being hurt sparks something within him. It sets Merlin off, creates a tunnel vision that causes him to discard his own sense of self preservation as he rushes down the stairs in leaps and bounds.

It's not Arthur that he first sees, but Lancelot, tied to a wooden chair, his face bruised beyond measure.

"Lancelot!" Merlin all but screams, rushing towards him only to be held back by the strong arms that he recognises belong to Percy.

Then it's Arthur's voice, loud and booming in a bone-chilling way as he cuts through the scuffle. "Get him out of here!"

In the dimly lit cellar, Arthur looks deranged. Blood coats his knuckles, it's splattered in lines across his shirt, drying up in various shades of brown and crimson. There's even some on his cheek. The tiny droplets of colour make the blue of Arthur's eyes look almost demonic.

"No!" Merlin struggles— despite the fact that Percy's grip is akin to that of wrought iron chains— but he does his best, and manages to give Arthur a pleading look. "You can't do this to him! He has a wife, Gwen's pregnant for God's sake what did he do to deserve this?"

"He sold us out," Arthur says, face twisted in disgust. "Or a least tried to."

"But..." In the dimly lit basement, Merlin recognises the silhouette of Gwaine, as well as someone else. He doesn't know who that man is, only that the red of his scruffy hair flickers under the single light bulb. "Lancelot," he says, feeling an awful hollowness consume his chest.

Merlin's been with Arthur long enough to roughly gauge the inner workings of their family. At least, enough to pick up the rules and boundaries, and understand the concept of "blood in, blood out." He does his best anyway. "Arthur. Arthur, please," he pleads, shameless in his begging. "Don't do this."

"Lancelot." Arthur says, still gazing at Merlin. He is beyond furious, livid to the point where the promise of murder is evident upon his face. "Rule number one."

"Arthur-" Lancelot says, voice raw from having screamed so much.

"Rule. Number. One."

Lancelot's so injured he can barely keep his head up but he does his best, looking at Arthur, and then at Merlin before lowering his gaze. "Be loyal," he says, in a tone very accepting of his own end. "Don't be an informer."

"You knew," Arthur says. "You *knew* the what would happen and yet you did it anyway."

"*For me.*" Merlin says frantically, practically trying to claw his way out of Percy's arms. "If not for Lancelot, for me." He says, because Arthur's done it before. He let Edwin go, so surely, *surely* he would be able to give mercy to Lancelot.

Just like that, Arthur's outraged expression dims down, dies, only to be hardened by a blankness that makes Merlin's blood run cold.

"Arthur," Lancelot says, "I know I have no right to ask, but Gwen..."

*Oh god.* Merlin thinks. Gwen, Gwen with her new baby, surely Arthur wouldn't do anything to



her? Arthur is capable of many things, but there has to be a line drawn somewhere.

“You’ve been loyal to me for a very long time, Lancelot.” Arthur speaks stiffly, curtly as if this was a conversation about the stock market. “Gwen will be provided for despite your recent indiscretion.”

“Thank you,” Lancelot says, and Merlin is angry, so very angry, because Lancelot shouldn’t be thanking Arthur, not when it looks like he’s going to die at Arthur’s hand. It’s not right. Nothing about this is right.

“Take Merlin to my office,” Arthur orders, holding out a bloodied hand towards Gwaine who passes him a gun.

“No!” Merlin exclaims, fighting tooth and nail as Percy drags him kicking and screaming like a child throwing a tantrum up the stairs and out of the basement.

The moment the basement door swings shut, a gunshot rings out, loud and clear. Merlin feels sick to the pit of his stomach and fights the urge to vomit.

He doesn’t fight Percy anymore, just lets himself be led to Arthur’s office where, for the first time since being here, he’s locked in against his will.

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“You’re a bastard, Arthur Pendragon,” Merlin says the moment the door creaks open and Arthur enters.

He’s changed his clothes and his hands have been cleaned of blood, Merlin notices, but the scratches upon the knuckles and the redness is still there, a painful reminder of what had just happened.

“Tell me something I don’t know,” Arthur replies, sounding tired. He doesn’t even bother looking at Merlin. Instead, he makes his way to his desk where he pulls out the decanter of Scotch, pours himself a glass and downs it all with a grimace. “He knew what he was getting into. They all do.”

“You didn’t have to do that to him, you know?” He’s standing as far away from Arthur as he can, not out of fear, but because he doesn’t trust himself, doesn’t know what to do next, is torn between punching Arthur in the face for being such a monster and holding him close because he had been betrayed by someone he held so dear.

“Oh?” Another glass. “You know that, do you?”

“You’re the boss!” Merlin insists hotly. “If you wanted to you could’ve spared him! It was Lancelot, damn you.”

“Merlin!” Arthur barks out, an order drowned out by broken laughter. “That’s exactly it! I’m the boss and I need to set an example. What kind of message do you think it sends, if I had let Lancelot live?”

“Merciful.”

“Weak.” Arthur corrects darkly. “It would’ve left the family vulnerable, put everyone at risk. Don’t you understand, Merlin? It only takes a single person to bring everything down.”

“So you kill Lancelot to set an example?” He asks incredulously.

“Yes! There is no other way. We can’t afford to be weak.”

Merlin’s never heard Arthur sound so broken before and it makes his heart ache in a way that he really shouldn’t. He swallows thickly, “If,” he starts, knowing that he’ll regret his words but saying them anyway, because he’s human and foolish. “If you loved me then you would’ve found-”

*“Don’t you dare.”*

There’s a sound of glass shattering on the hardwood wall, followed by the decanter being hurled across the room, colliding with the wall in dazzling shards of crystal and glass. The Scotch spreads upon the floor, flooding the glass shards and releasing that rich, heady perfume of alcohol. Then Arthur’s right in front of him, breaching Merlin’s personal space, trapping him against the wall.

“Don’t you dare use my feelings against me,” he snarls, blue eyes a flurry of emotion. He’s hurt, *grieving* for the loss of his friend even though he had been the one to pull the trigger.

Merlin allows it when Arthur brings a hand up to grasp at his throat, caging him like a collar, just a bit more force and Merlin’s air would be cut off but he’s not scared, because Arthur would never hurt him, can’t hurt him. It’s almost shameless, how he plays on Arthur’s weakness.

“I got fucked over by my best friend, *Merlin*.” Arthur’s breath smells of Scotch and his eyes are wide and reddened. His jaws are clenched so tightly he can barely manage to wrangle out the words. “He was going to sell us out, all of us.”

Merlin doesn’t know what to say, doesn’t know how to fix this.

“Are you going to betray me too, Merlin?” Arthur asks, barely a whisper. He’s so close that their lips are practically touching. “Going to stab me in the back when I’m not looking?”

And then Merlin knows, even though it feels more like slapping a flimsy bandaid on a gaping wound than anything sufficient. “You’re an idiot.”

“Merlin.” Arthur scoffs, snorting in some sort of twisted amusement before he tightens his grip around Merlin’s throat a fraction. “Merlin,” he whispers, tongue slipping out to lap at the corner of Merlin’s lips. “Merlin. What am I going to do with you?” He asks, sounding utterly lost.

It’s Merlin that tilts his head for a kiss, and Arthur accepts, gladly, takes it as permission to do as he pleases and he does. The kiss is harsh—teeth that bite at Merlin’s tongue and lips. Arthur’s grip still a touch on the side of painful.

By the time they’re done kissing, Merlin’s a panting mess, cock lewdly tenting the front of his pants. “Are you going to sell me out to the highest bidder?” Arthur nibbles his jaw, suckling at the spot under his chin. He lets go of the grip he has on Merlin’s throat to pull and tug at their pants, unbuckling the belts and popping open the buttons.

Merlin pants for air, trousers and underwear pooling around his ankles. He’s only given a moment to gingerly step out of them while Arthur does the same. Merlin’s pressed against the wall again, leaving him slightly winded. “Arthur,” he whimpers, erection rubbing against the bare thigh that’s forced between his legs. “God damn you,” he practically snarls, all choked up and frustrated. “You absolute idiot. I have no bloody idea what to do with you either.”

“You’re stuck with me,” Arthur murmurs hotly against his ear. “Mine.”

Hands slide down to Merlin’s arse, gripping almost painfully before fingers delve into the crevice between his cheeks. He bites back a keen when Arthur’s fingers enter him. He’s slick from before,

but it's still a tight fit. Arthur isn't being gentle though the twinge of pain at being pried open only heightens Merlin's pleasure.

"God." Merlin gasps, letting out a long, drawn moan as Arthur enters him, bottoming out until the base of his cock presses against Merlin's stretched rim.

"*Merlin.*" Arthur chides, nipping painfully at the tip of his ear. "The only thing," he grunts, pulling out to shove back in with enough force to have the air punched out of Merlin's lungs, "I want to hear out of your whore mouth is my name."

"M-my whore mouth?" Merlin laughs breathlessly. Arthur's touches are electrifying. Merlin is so aware of it all. The desperation as Arthur claws his shirt open, hands gliding over his chest, teasing at the nipples before slipping down towards his belly and cupping at his ass again, carrying his weight as if Merlin weighed little more than an ounce.

"*Arthur,*" he says softly, teasingly into Arthur's ear.

They don't talk much after that, too busy consuming each other. Panting breaths and soft grunts interrupted by open mouthed kisses that have Merlin's lips feeling bruised and ravished. Arthur fucks him with an unspoken urgency, tiny little grunts in Merlin's ear, the occasional whisper of his name, syllables broken up into pieces like the glass on the floor. The few pictures nailed to the wall shake in tune with their lovemaking and Merlin could almost laugh at how ridiculous it seems.

All Merlin can do in return is cling to Arthur, hands wringing the back of Arthur's shirt while he hikes up a knee to hook on Arthur's waist.

The friction of Arthur's hard stomach rubbing against his cock along with Arthur's cock rubbing that spot within him is too much and Merlin comes with an intensity that has tears pooling in the corners of his eyes. Warmth splatters between their bodies and he whimpers out Arthur's name, feeling his internal muscles rippling around Arthur's cock, milking him.

Arthur's orgasm is more fierce, growling low and rabid in his throat as he pistons in and out of Merlin a few more times before spilling his seed. Gently, Merlin is lowered down, both feet on the floor and Arthur's cock still hot within him as they try to catch their breaths.

The scent of Scotch, sweat and sex tingle his senses as Merlin comes down from his sex high. Arthur rests his forehead against his and looks at him with such tenderness Merlin cannot mistake it for anything else but love.

Merlin closes his eyes, basking in the intensity of it all as he's brought back by the gentle kisses that Arthur litters over his neck and face.

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The ride back to Merlin's home is- odd, made worse by the fact that Daegal gets them lost more than once.

There's something heavy in the air between them, made stronger by the sex that they just had.

Arthur is unable to meet Merlin's gaze, choosing to look out the window the whole trip. Though he hasn't let go of Merlin's hand since the beginning. His fingers, clad in fine, supple leather make circles, sweeping over the back of Merlin's hand in a soothing absentmindedness. Occasionally his grip tightens, as if needing to reaffirm that Merlin was still here.

Finally they reach their destination, the view of his apartment block a sign for Merlin to leave.

“Merlin.” Arthur’s still not looking at him, but Merlin sees his reflection on the car tinted window. Sees the tight tension in Arthur’s jaw that has it almost ticking, how his gaze is unblinking and unwavering. “I love you,” he says, grits it out in such a way it’s almost as if it pains him to admit such a thing. As if he had to confess under duress or torture.

Merlin think that it does in a way, because Arthur’s told him once before, how things such as love and affection were a sign of weakness he couldn’t afford.

“I,” Merlin starts, and then the other three words die within his throat, melt back into his mind to be locked away, the key thrown away. “I know, Arthur,” he says instead. “I know.”

Arthur nods once to himself, squeezing Merlin’s hand one more time before he lets go, allowing Merlin to get out of the car.

Merlin watches Arthur’s car drive away, feeling like a coward. He doesn’t understand why he wasn’t able to return Arthur’s affections because... Because he thinks... *No*. He’s not ready, not yet. He can’t even admit it to himself. The feeling of guilt looms over him, a ball and chain around his ankle as he makes his way up to his apartment.

He enters his apartment, throwing the keys onto the table, wanting nothing more than to take another shower and go to bed. He only takes a few steps in before notices a shadow looming over him.

Merlin doesn’t turn around in time and a searing pain hits him at the back of the head. He falls, knees painfully crashing to the floor. As his consciousness seeps away, he realises he’s being tied up, rope knotted too tightly around his wrists. Merlin’s last thought is of Arthur, because he knows that whatever’s happening to him right at this very moment has something to do with Arthur. He falls unconscious, filled with regret for things unspoken.

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